

**Farm Program Fact Sheet****March 1998****Emergency Conservation Program****Purpose**

The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by wind erosion, floods, hurricanes, or other natural disaster, and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures during periods of severe drought.

The natural disaster must create new conservation problems, which, if not treated, would:

- 1) impair or endanger the land;
- 2) materially affect the productive capacity of the land;
- 3) represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and
- 4) be so costly to repair that Federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

Conservation problems existing prior to the disaster involved are not eligible for cost-sharing assistance. ECP is administered by State and county Farm Service Agency (FSA) committees.

Program Administration

Subject to availability of funds, county FSA committees, with concurrence by the FSA State committee, are authorized to implement ECP for eligible farmers for all disasters except drought. When severe drought conditions exist, the determination to implement the program will be made by the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs (DAFP), FSA.

Cost-share levels up to 64 percent are set by county FSA committees. Eligibility for ECP assistance is determined by county FSA committees based on individual on-site inspections, taking into account the type and extent of damage. Individual or cumulative requests for cost-sharing of \$20,000 or less per person per disaster may be approved by county FSA committees, and of \$20,001 to \$62,500 by State FSA committees. Cost-sharing over \$62,500 must be approved by DAFP. Technical assistance may be provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Emergency Practices

Emergency practices to rehabilitate farmland damaged by wind erosion and other disasters, including drought, may include debris removal, providing water for livestock, fence restoration, grading and shaping of farmland, restoring structures, and water conservation measures. Other emergency conservation measures may be authorized by county FSA committees with approval by State FSA committees and DAFP. Farmers or ranchers may enter into pooling agreements to jointly solve mutual conservation problems.

Funding

Funding for the program is appropriated by Congress.

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